



A+ Parent Satisfaction Survey: 2006

Prepared for the Arizona State Board of Education

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June 2006

Arizona Policy Education Initiative
A Collaborative Project of Arizona State University,
the University of Arizona, and Northern Arizona University

AEPI is coordinated by the
Education Policy Studies Laboratory

EPSL-0606-203-AEPI

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Introduction

The *A+ Parent Satisfaction Survey* has been conducted since 1999. The 2006 survey was commissioned by the Arizona State Board of Education (State Board) and conducted by the Arizona Education Policy Initiative (AEPI), a collaboration of Arizona State University, the University of Arizona, and Northern Arizona University. The purpose of the survey is to measure parental satisfaction with Arizona K-12 public schools. In addition, the survey contains questions to measure parental awareness and opinion of key State Board policies.

Methods

Survey Instrument

In an effort to maintain consistency over time, the wordings of the *2006 A+ Survey* parent satisfaction questions are identical or nearly identical to the parent satisfaction questions in previous *A+ Surveys*. The parental satisfaction questions have been carried over, nearly verbatim, since the initial *A+ survey*. In addition, many questions from the *2005 A+ survey* are retained in the current survey.

The A+ questions were embedded in the AEPI survey, *Parent Attitudes about Education in Arizona: 2006*. The full AEPI parent survey instrument is available online at:

http://www.asu.edu/educ/epsl/AEPI/AEPI_2006_annual_survey.htm

The full survey instrument was designed by Dr. David R. Garcia, Dr. Alex Molnar, and Dr. Bruce Merrill of Arizona State University.

Survey Administration

In 2004, the A+ *Survey* was administered via the Arizona Department of Education (ADE) website.¹ Due to a number of limitations associated with the parent sample, the 2004 results do not generalize to the statewide population of Arizona parents and the 2004 results are not comparable to the results from previous years or to the 2005 results. The 2006 results are comparable to the 2005 results and are comparable to the results from previous years, except 2004.

The survey results in this report are based on 410 telephone interviews with a statewide random sample of adult heads of household living in Arizona. The sample generalizes to all adult heads of household living in Arizona with children attending public schools, including charter schools. The samples were stratified by county to ensure they were representative of all adults living in Arizona. In addition, a statewide sample of 101 Hispanic public school parents was surveyed. The dual statewide samples make it possible to compare differences in opinion between Anglo and Hispanic parents.

The interview schedule was pre-tested and the interviews conducted by professional interviewers at the Summit Group in Phoenix. The survey was administered from March 18 to

March 27, 2006. The surveys were conducted using a Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI) system.

If an interview was not successfully completed after eight callbacks, random substitution was allowed with telephones numbers in the same prefix. Sixty-nine percent of the respondents were interviewed successfully. Respondents were given the option of taking the survey in Spanish or English. The sample demographics are contained in the final section of the report.

The sampling error for the statewide sample is plus or minus 4.9 percent, given a response to a question of 50 percent and assuming a 95 percent level of significance. Sampling error varies based on the percentage of the sample that answers a question in a particular way. Sampling errors for various percentages when the sample size is 400 are shown below:

	Sampling Error
50%	4.9%
40% or 60%	4.8%
30% or 70%	4.5%
20% or 80%	3.9%
10% or 90%	2.9%

The data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). All of the following tables reflect the percent of respondents.

Findings

Parent Satisfaction with Public Schools

The opinions of Arizona parents toward their public schools are consistent with national surveys.² Arizona parents perceive the schools that their children attend more favorably than Arizona public schools in general. While 32 percent of parents rate the school their oldest child

attends as “A+” or “A,” only 8 percent of parents grade all schools as highly. Seventy-two percent of Arizona parents grade the school their oldest child attends an “A+,” “A,” or a “B” while only 35 percent of Arizona parents grade all Arizona public schools an “A+,” “A,” or a “B.”

The 2006 parent ratings of the school their oldest child attends are statistically identical to the 2005 results. Also, 2005 and 2006 parent ratings of all public schools are identical at the low and high ends of the scale. Compared to 2005, however, a higher percentage of parents rated all public schools a “C” and a lower percentage of parents rated all public schools a “B” in 2006.

Table 1: Grading Arizona Schools (2006)

	A+	A	B	C	D	F	No Opinion
What grade would you give to the school your oldest child attends?	5	27	40	20	5	2	<1
What grade would you give to the job public schools in Arizona are doing?	1	7	27	42	13	5	6

Note: Percentages may not add up to 100 because of rounding.

Table 2: Grading Arizona Schools (2005)

	A+	A	B	C	D	F	No Opinion
What grade would you give to the school your oldest child attends?	7	29	42	17	3	2	1
What grade would you give to the job public schools in Arizona are doing?	1	6	32	37	10	5	9

Note: Percentages may not add up to 100 because of rounding.

Parent satisfaction ratings have declined slightly since the initial *A+ survey*. In 1999, 37 percent of Arizona parents rated the school their oldest child attended with an “A+” or “A” and 15 percent of parents rated their school a “C”.³ Compared to the 1999 results, the 2006 parent ratings have declined 5 percentage points in the “A+” and “A” categories combined and have increased 5 percentage points in the “C” rating category.

Table 3: Grading Arizona Schools (1999)

	A+	A	B	C	D	F	No Opinion
What grade would you give to the school your oldest child attends?	7	30	43	15	3	1	1

Note: Percentages may not add up to 100 because of rounding.

School Accountability

The State Board of Education sets policy for both of Arizona’s school accountability systems, No Child Left Behind (NCLB), and Arizona LEARNS. The degree to which parents are familiar with each school accountability system was assessed as contextual information to interpret parental opinion of the two accountability systems. Only parents who regarded themselves as very or somewhat familiar with the accountability systems were asked their opinion of the systems. As in 2005, many more parents are familiar with the federal NCLB accountability system than the state accountability system. Sixty-seven percent of parents are either very or somewhat familiar with NCLB. Overall, parents are becoming more familiar with NCLB. The percent of parents who are very familiar with NCLB has increased by 10 percentage points from 2005 to 2006. Fifty-six percent of parents who are familiar with NCLB hold a

favorable opinion of the federal law. Far fewer parents (21 percent) are familiar with Arizona LEARNS. Of the parents who are familiar with Arizona LEARNS, a considerably higher percentage than last year hold a very favorable opinion of the policy. Parental opinion of Arizona LEARNS, however, is not generalizable to the statewide population because too few parents were familiar enough with the accountability system to provide a rating.

Table 4: Knowledge of NCLB (2006)

	Very Familiar	Somewhat Familiar	Not Very Familiar	Not at all Familiar	No Opinion
How familiar would you say you are with the No Child Left Behind Act – the federal education bill passed by Congress in 2001?	27	40	24	9	<1

Note: Percentages may not add up to 100 because of rounding.

Table 5: Knowledge of NCLB (2005)

	Very Familiar	Somewhat Familiar	Not Very Familiar	Not at all Familiar	No Opinion
How familiar would you say you are with the No Child Left Behind Act – the federal education bill passed by Congress in 2001?	17	49	27	8	0

Note: Percentages may not add up to 100 because of rounding.

Table 6: Opinion of NCLB (2006)

	Very Favorable	Generally Favorable	Somewhat Unfavorable	Very Unfavorable	No Opinion
From what you have heard or read about NCLB, what is your opinion of the act?	20	38	25	15	3

Note: This table includes only respondents who were either “very” or “somewhat” familiar with NCLB. The total number of respondents equals 272.

Table 7: Opinion of NCLB (2005)

	Very Favorable	Generally Favorable	Somewhat Unfavorable	Very Unfavorable	No Opinion
From what you have heard or read about NCLB, what is your opinion of the act?	12	43	30	13	2

Note: This table includes only respondents who were either “very” or “somewhat” familiar with NCLB. The total number of respondents equals 261.

Table 8: Knowledge of Arizona LEARNS (2006)

	Very Familiar	Somewhat Familiar	Not Very Familiar	Not at all Familiar	No Opinion
How familiar would you say you are with the Arizona LEARNS – Arizona’s School Accountability System?	10	11	26	53	1

Note: Percentages may not add up to 100 because of rounding.

Table 9: Knowledge of Arizona LEARNS (2005)

	Very Familiar	Somewhat Familiar	Not Very Familiar	Not at all Familiar	No Opinion
How familiar would you say you are with the Arizona LEARNS – Arizona’s School Accountability System?	5	15	34	46	1

Note: Percentages may not add up to 100 because of rounding.

Table 10: Opinion of Arizona LEARNS (2006)

	Very Favorable	Generally Favorable	Somewhat Unfavorable	Very Unfavorable	No Opinion
From what you have heard or read about NCLB, what is your opinion of the act?	26	34	26	11	5

Note: This table includes only respondents who were either “very” or “somewhat” familiar with Arizona LEARNS. The total number of respondents equals 86.

Table 11: Opinion of Arizona LEARNS (2005)

	Very Favorable	Generally Favorable	Somewhat Unfavorable	Very Unfavorable	No Opinion
From what you have heard or read about NCLB, what is your opinion of the act?	4	58	22	9	7

Note: This table includes only respondents who were either “very” or “somewhat” familiar with Arizona LEARNS. The total number of respondents equals 76.

AIMS as a Graduation Requirement

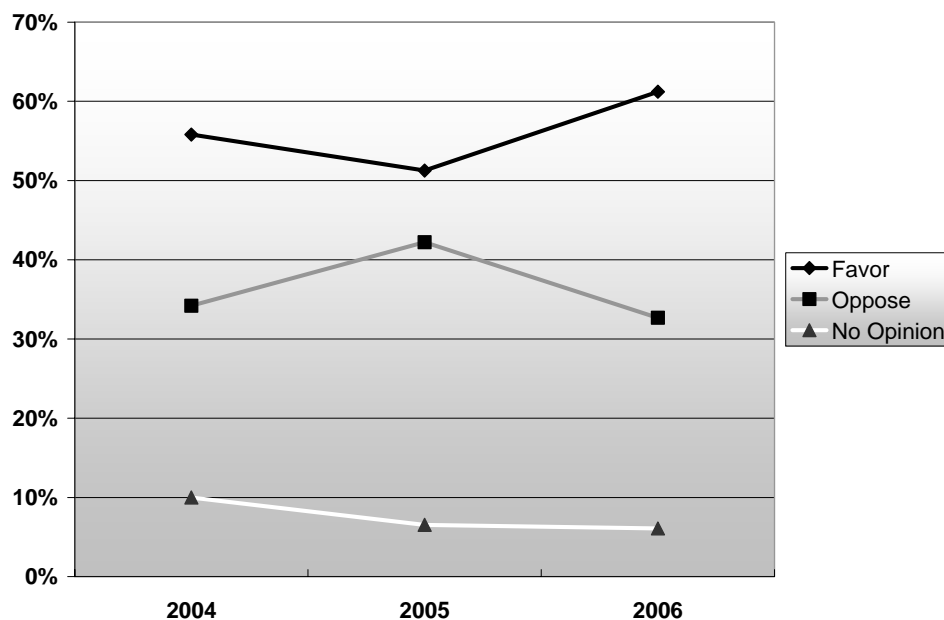
This spring, the Class of 2006 became the first group of Arizona students required to pass Arizona’s Instrument to Measure Standards (AIMS) to graduate from high school. From 2004 to 2005, parental support for AIMS as a graduation requirement declined by 8 percentage points, and in 2005, a slim majority of Arizona parents (51 percent) approved of using AIMS to determine whether students should receive a diploma. With the graduation requirement now on the horizon, parental support of AIMS has reversed course with 61 percent of parents now favoring the test as a graduation requirement, a 10 percentage point *increase* from last year and an 18 percentage point *increase* from 2004 (see Figure 1).

Since the 2005 parent survey, the legislature has relieved the pressure associated with AIMS as a graduation requirement by allowing course grades to be factored into graduation decisions. As a result, far fewer students are expected to be denied a diploma than had been reported in previous years.⁴ This change may have helped shift parental opinion on the use of AIMS as a graduation requirement.

Table 12: AIMS as a Graduation Requirement

	Favor	Oppose	No Opinion
Do you favor or oppose of requiring students to pass the AIMS test before they graduate from high school?	61	33	6

Figure 1: AIMS as a Graduation Requirement, by Year



School Report Cards

The Arizona Department of Education publishes School Report Cards as an information source for parents about school policies and academic performance. Sixty-five percent of all parents have reviewed a School Report Card, but a significantly higher percentage of Anglo parents (68 percent) have reviewed a School Report Card than Hispanic parents (52 percent). Hispanic parents may be less likely to have viewed a School Report Card because the report cards are primarily distributed online and only 69 percent of Hispanic parents report having access to the internet, compared to 95 percent of Anglo parents. If School Report Cards are the primary state-sponsored information source about schools, then they should continue to be available in multiple formats. A high percentage of parents who have viewed a School Report Card hold a favorable opinion of them.

Table 13: Opinion of School Report Cards

	Very Favorable	Generally Favorable	Somewhat Unfavorable	Very Unfavorable	No Opinion
What is your opinion of the School Report Cards?	29	49	13	6	4

Note: Percents may not add up 100 due to rounding.

Conclusion

The *A+ Survey* is an informative measure of parental satisfaction with Arizona K-12 public schools. The general public and state organizations have come to rely on the annual ratings as an independent assessment of the overall state of Arizona public schools and as a means of benchmarking the impact of state initiatives. The survey is also a unique opportunity

for the State Board to solicit feedback from parents about its policies. The State Board should continue to seek the type of feedback that they need to shape education policy and should continue to use the *A+ Survey* for this purpose.

Sample Demographics

The following tables detail the demographic characteristics of the statewide sample of survey respondents. All numbers reported are percentages. The percentages may not equal 100 due to rounding.

Table 14: Child's School Level

Does your <u>oldest</u> child attend a...			
	2004	2005	2006
Elementary	38.7	37.4	42.0
Middle school	20.2	18.6	20.0
High school	41.0	43.7	37.1
Refused	0	0.3	1.0

Table 15: Child Attend a Charter School

Does your oldest child attend a charter school?		
	2005	2006
Yes	22.9	15.9
No	76.9	84.1
No opinion	0.3	N/A

Table 16: Children Under Age 6

Do you have a child or children under the age of 6?			
	2004	2005	2006
Yes	28.2	30.7	36.8
No	71.8	69.4	63.2

Table 17: Language Spoken in Household

Which of the following best characterizes your household?			
	2004	2005	2006
We speak only English in our household	84.3	82.9	79.0
We speak mainly English, but another language as well	15.7	17.1	17.6
We speak little or no English in our household	N/A	0	3.4
Refused to answer	N/A	0	N/A

Table 18: Race/Ethnicity of Surveyed Parents

In terms of race or ethnicity, which of the following do you <u>most</u> identify with?			
	2004	2005	2006
White or Anglo	77.5	73.9	67.1
Hispanic or Latino	11.7	14.1	18.0
Native American	3.4	3.3	3.9
African American	4.0	1.8	2.7
Two or more races	N/A	4.0	4.6
Other	3.4	2.3	3.7
Refused to answer	0	0.8	N/A

Table 19: Parents' Education

How many years of formal education have you completed?		
	2005	2006
High school or less	15.6	18.8
Some college or trade school	42.0	41.7
Graduated college	42.2	38.5
Refused to answer	0.3	1.0

Table 20: Access to the Internet

Do you have access to the internet?		
	2005	2006
Yes	91.2	87.6
No	8.8	12.4

Table 21: Born in United States

Were you born in the United States?			
	2004	2005	2006
Yes	92.9	92.7	90.5
No	7.1	7.3	9.5

Table 22: Registered to Vote in Arizona

Are you registered to vote and in Arizona?			
	2004	2005	2006
Yes	92.6	93.7	91.0
No	7.4	6.3	9.0

Table 23: County of Residence

In what county do you reside?			
	2004	2005	2006
Maricopa	61.5	63.6	58.7
Pima	16.5	14.3	19.8
Mohave			3.7
Cochise			3.2
Pinal			3.2
Yavapai			3.2
Coconino			2.7
Yuma			2.7
Navajo			1.0
Apache			0.5
Gila			0.5
Graham			0.5
Santa Cruz			0.5
LaPaz			0.2
Other	21.9	21.9	N/A
Refused	0	0.3	N/A

Table 24: Gender of Parent Surveyed

	2004	2005	2006
Male	45	44.2	41.5
Female	55	55.8	58.5

Table 25: Language Used for Survey

	2004	2005	2006
English	98.6	100	96.3
Spanish	0.9	0	3.2
Both English and Spanish	0.6	0	0.5

Notes & References

¹ For the 2004 survey questions, see:

Arizona Department of Education, Research and Evaluation Division. (July, 2004). *A+ program parent satisfaction survey summary report*. Phoenix, AZ: Author.

² Rose, L.C. & Gallup, A.M. (2005, September). *The 37th annual Phi Delta Kappa/Gallup poll of the public's attitudes toward the public schools*. Princeton, N.J.: Phi Delta Kappa. Retrieved May 25, 2006, from <http://www.pdkintl.org/kappan/kpollpdf.htm>.

³ Behavior Research Center. (May, 2000). *A+ Program Parent Satisfaction Survey*. Phoenix, AZ: Author.

⁴ *Arizona Republic* (2006, March 27). AIMS results won't hold many seniors back, B9.